

# 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. leaders aim to keep Soldiers safe on 'home' front

By Spc. Jason Dangel

4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Force protection remains a top priority for leaders and Soldiers in the U.S. Army today.

Whether at home or abroad, the leaders, officers and noncommissioned officers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, implement the necessary procedures to keep their Soldiers safe.

With the support of the Cobra Brigade's Safety Program, mandated by Col. Michael Beech, the brigade commander, the brigade's officers and noncommissioned officers have instituted a risk-management program for Cobra Soldiers that will allow them to accomplish their missions while maintaining readiness and protecting the force.

Headed by Sean Morrill, the brigade's safety officer, the 4th BCT's Army Safety Program aims to promote positive safety trends within the brigade to ensure their Soldiers are mission capable.

To help the brigade accomplish its force protection mission, leaders plan to employ the NCO Preventive Loss Program.

The program will place safety responsibilities and objectives on the shoulders of the brigade's first-line supervisors to prevent accidents, said Morrill. First-line

supervisors have the most contact with Soldiers and also have the most influence on the decisions the Soldiers make.

“Army safety activities are organized to protect the force and enhance war-fighting ability through a system of hazard identification and risk management,” he explained. “The safety of our Soldiers starts with their first-line supervisors or sergeants. Soldiers are most influenced by the NCOs they see every day, and that is why it is important to get them involved as much as possible.”

The Soldier-centric approach will help to develop a fuller evaluation of potential dangers, thus creating more effective risk mitigation, he said.

The brigade safety program focuses on motor vehicles and motorcycle safety measures, which include various types of inspections and online safety courses to assist Soldiers in mitigating risks while operating on the road.

Accidents on the road remain the number-one threat to Soldiers while at home, Morrill stated.

While the brigade’s safety methods are not new to many of the Soldiers, leaders will continue to reinforce regular safety standards as well as enforce composite risk management programs to protect the Soldiers.

“Junior enlisted Soldiers already know what’s right and wrong,” said Staff Sgt. Jasha Barker, personnel NCO, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th BCT. “Safety is something we preach to them all the time, and it’s the last thing they hear before they go home for the weekend. Being safe is just as important in the rear as it was when we were in Iraq – all the rules still apply.”

Composite Risk Management focuses on sustaining Soldier readiness and managing all risks, to include risks posed by the enemy, environment and human error.

Since returning from Iraq in early December, brigade Soldiers have experienced eight accidents, ranging from privately-owned vehicle accidents to personal injuries, none of which have been fatal, said Morrill.

In comparison, the Soldiers only had four accidents during its recent yearlong deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Despite almost doubling the number of mishaps since returning from Iraq, the increase in accidents is not abnormal, said Morrill.

“Unlike Iraq, Soldiers have more freedom when they are home,” he explained. “They have their own cars or motorcycles and are influenced less by their leaders; these are the main contributing factors to the increase in accidents.”

Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Boyer, the brigade safety NCO, said he has been impressed with the Soldier’s ability to make the right decisions.

“Granted, we have had some accidents since we’ve been back from Iraq, but that is expected,” the Safety NCO stated.

“We know our leaders are doing the right things. We can’t prevent every accident from occurring, but we can educate our Soldiers and influence them to make the right decisions,” Boyer said.

Even though Boyer is satisfied with the progress of the brigade safety plan, he said he remains content on warning his troops about the dangers of the road, which is the number one cause of fatal accidents in the Army.

Operational tempo remains high within the ranks of the Cobra Combat Team, said Boyer, and it is important for Soldiers to remain vigilant and well rested before setting out on the highways.

First-line supervisors have a responsibility to ensure their Soldiers are in good shape when they leave the unit, explained Boyer.

“Sometimes when Soldiers first get back from a deployment, they feel invincible,” he said. “This is when most accidents occur.”

“The fact is if something seems wrong – don’t do it, because it probably is; and that is the message I want to get across to the Soldiers,” he said.

For more information regarding ways to prevent accidents, Soldiers can contact their unit safety office or visit the U.S. Army Safety Center Website at <https://safety.army.mil>.

The Web site offers many comprehensive online safety courses and information to help assess risk and prevent accidents.



### **Safety Brief.**

Lt. Col. Joseph Gandara, commander, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, delivers a safety brief before sending his Soldiers off for a four-day weekend Feb. 15. Commanders and noncommissioned officers place heavy emphasis on safety within the ranks of the brigade.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



**Boyer, Morrill.**

Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Boyer, brigade safety noncommissioned officer, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and Sean Morrill, brigade safety officer, discuss the newly revised motorcycle operator's safety roster during a brief meeting Feb. 15. Motorcycle and automobile safety remains a top concern for safety officials in the brigade.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.)